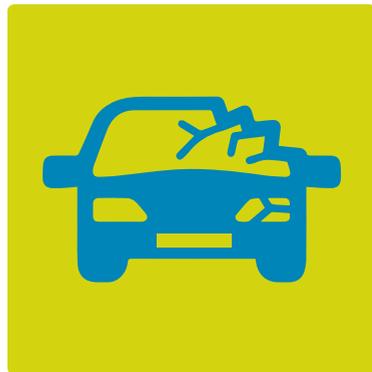
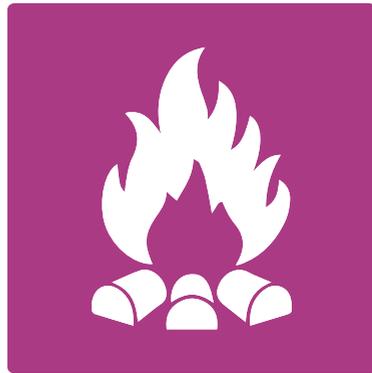




Metropolitan

# Everybody needs good neighbours

Steps you can take to tackle nuisance and anti-social behaviour (ASB)



**Are your neighbours' actions, pets, noise or rubbish causing a nuisance? If you're affected by anti-social behaviour (ASB), there are steps that you can take yourself to solve the problem.**

**By working together with us, your neighbours, your council and the police, you have the power to improve the quality of life in your neighbourhood.**

### **What is anti-social behaviour?**

Anti-social behaviour (ASB) is behaviour that may disturb or cause a nuisance to others. It covers a range of issues of varying severity, including unreasonable noise, pet nuisance, drug dealing, harassment and domestic violence

**If someone is injured, being threatened or in danger, contact the police and/or other emergency services immediately by dialling 999.**

### **What isn't anti-social behaviour?**

Most issues with neighbours aren't classed as ASB, and can be resolved informally.

Some behaviour or activities can be irritating, such as occasional noisy parties or barbecues, children playing or babies crying. However these are generally part of everyday life rather than ASB, and we all need to try and be tolerant and aware of what's reasonable.

The difference between everyday life noise and unreasonable noise isn't always clear, however, so please talk to your housing officer or council noise team if you're not sure.

### **Discuss the issue with your neighbour**

If there is a problem, talk to your neighbour at an early stage if you can. They might not realise they are causing you any disturbance.



Here are some tips to help you work out a solution together:

- It's usually best not to involve the police or local council to start with.
- Don't wait until things get out of hand before you complain.
- Don't go round when you're feeling angry or upset.
- Choose a time that's best for everyone, e.g. early evening or during the day at a weekend.
- Plan beforehand what you are going to say.
- Talk face-to-face if possible.
- Be clear about what the problem is, the impact it is having on you and how you think it can be resolved.
- Stay calm, polite and pleasant – don't escalate things by being argumentative or threatening.
- Be prepared to listen to their side of the story and don't interrupt.
- Try to come to an agreement that everyone is happy with.
- If you're not comfortable talking face-to-face, write a letter explaining the problem clearly and sticking to the facts. Avoid language that may offend. A tenants' association might help if you're a member of one.
- Don't put yourself at risk. Leave straight away if people are aggressive or threatening.

## Working together to resolve ASB

If raising an issue informally isn't possible or doesn't work, report the behaviour to us. What happens next depends on the severity of the behaviour.

If you've already reported ASB to us and we've sent you this booklet, it may be because there are actions you can take yourself to resolve the situation. We will investigate your case if you've already tried talking to your neighbour, or where this might put you at risk. We will always investigate if your complaint is of domestic abuse, is hate-related or involves physical violence.

If your neighbour is not our tenant you could contact their landlord.

### Reporting ASB to us

**Call us on 020 3535 3535** or you can file a report online at [www.metropolitan.org.uk/asb](http://www.metropolitan.org.uk/asb). You can also report ASB in person at our offices or in writing to the address on the back page.

Our website also has more information on different types of ASB and the options available to deal with them.

### Keep a record of what happens

Some incidents of ASB are very difficult to prove. It's important that you keep a record of all incidents and tell us about any other people who may have seen or heard what happened. You can download diary sheets and an app for recording noise at [www.metropolitan.org.uk/asb](http://www.metropolitan.org.uk/asb)

### Contact your local authority/council

You can also report ASB to your local authority, which has a range of powers to deal with different types of nuisance – find details at [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk). Further environmental advice and guidance can be found at [www.environmentlaw.org.uk](http://www.environmentlaw.org.uk)

## Use a mediation service

If you can't resolve a dispute by speaking to your neighbour or you don't feel comfortable doing so, mediation could help. Mediation involves an impartial person – trained in dealing with difficult discussions – exploring realistic solutions that are acceptable to all parties.



Mediation is quicker and less stressful than going to court, and is particularly useful when the problem behaviour is not a clear-cut breach of tenancy. As a Metropolitan customer you can apply through us to use mediation free of charge.

**Call 020 3535 3535** for more details.

## When to involve the police

All criminal behaviour should be reported to the police.

This includes:

- hate crime
- any incident involving threats or violence
- harassment
- domestic abuse
- fireworks
- joyriding
- drug use

You can call the police non-emergency number 101 to report ASB and get details of the team for your area. If you're reporting while the incident is happening then ring 999.

Victim Support is a charity that offers practical help and emotional support to anyone affected by crime. Visit [www.victimsupport.org.uk](http://www.victimsupport.org.uk) or call **0845 30 30 900** (9am to 9pm weekdays and 9am to 7pm weekends).

## Taking your own legal action

If you have tried all other possible ways to solve the issue with your neighbour, sometimes the legal route is the only option.



You could get **free legal advice** from a law centre, Civil Legal Advice or a Citizens Advice Bureau.

**Call 020 3535 3535** for more information.

## Types of ASB and problem behaviour you may be able to resolve yourself

### Animal cruelty

This should be reported to the RSPCA and/or the local authority.

### Ball games

Playing football and other ball games in the right place is not usually regarded as ASB. Talk to your neighbours if you're concerned about ball games being played near your property, and try to work together to reach a compromise.

Ball games persistently being played recklessly and causing damage to properties and vehicles can be classed as anti-social – if this is the case, report it to us.

### Barbecues and bonfires

Barbecues or bonfires must happen frequently to be considered a nuisance. They should not take place close to buildings or trees and we would investigate if they cause harm to people or our property. Your council can issue an abatement notice if a neighbour's bonfire is causing a nuisance. Any

out-of-control fire should be reported immediately to the fire brigade.

### Criminal damage

Any deliberate damage to our buildings, including doors and windows, should be reported to the police. Graffiti and fly-posting on Metropolitan property should be reported to us on 020 3535 3535, and we will arrange cleaning or repairs as necessary. Report graffiti and fly posting on other land to the council.

### Dogs – dangerous and stray dogs

Dangerous and uncontrolled dogs, aggressive barking, fighting and stray dogs should be reported to your local authority. It is not illegal to own a dangerous dog but it is illegal to breed them. Dog fighting is also illegal. Whether or not we can take action for someone simply owning a dog depends on their tenancy agreement/leases and what permissions have been given in the past.

### Dogs – barking

If you're affected by a dog that barks excessively, first approach the owner directly and explain the situation – they may not be aware of the problem. It may help to note the times of day the dog is barking. The Dogs Trust has practical advice for owners of barking dogs. If the owner is unapproachable or does not agree that the problem exists, report the matter to us and the local authority.

### Dogs – fouling

Check with your local authority: many have their own regulations and can issue fixed penalty notices against people who allow dogs to foul in open areas. Some also have regulations covering whether dogs are on a leash and the number that can be taken out at any one time. There are no powers to deal with fouling by cats.

### Fireworks

It is an offence for anyone under the age of 18 to possess a firework in a public place. Throwing fireworks is also illegal. Powers relating to fireworks misuse are shared between police and local authorities.

### Litter and fly-tipping

Litter and fly-tipping on the public highway should be reported to the local authority. If it's on Metropolitan land our cleaning contractors will remove it. We will only treat this as ASB if it is repeated and there is a possibility of establishing who is responsible.

### Noise

Noise nuisance can include loud music, barking dogs, shouting and DIY. Where noise is anti-social, we'll work with residents and local councils to stop the problem.

- Keep an incident diary and/or record noise as evidence.
- If talking to your neighbour does not work or if there is not a clear breach of tenancy we can usually refer you for mediation.
- Causing unacceptable levels of noise may be a breach of tenancy or lease. If we have evidence of a breach and the person responsible does not stop we will take action.
- Councils can also deal with noise – many have an out-of-hours team that can visit at night.

For more information visit our website or ask for our '**Bothered by Noise**' leaflet.

### Smoking in communal areas

Smoking in stairwells and other internal communal areas is illegal. You can report smoking to your local council as they have been given the power to prosecute individuals for breaking the law. If you suspect that cannabis or other illegal drugs are being smoked, report this to the police by dialling 101.

### Vehicles

Local authorities have the power or duty to remove vehicles abandoned on any land in the open air. They also deal with illegally parked vehicles and persistent car repairs. Joyriding should be reported to the police.

**Metropolitan is a leading provider of integrated housing, care and support services.**

**Contact Centre**

020 3535 3535

[contactus@metropolitan.org.uk](mailto:contactus@metropolitan.org.uk)

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PO Box 10262  
Nottingham NG8 9LE  
[www.metropolitan.org.uk](http://www.metropolitan.org.uk)

We want all of our customers to be able to understand the information we provide. If you need this leaflet in your own language, or in an alternative format (e.g. **large print, Braille, audio disc**), please contact us on **020 3535 3535** and we will take reasonable steps to arrange this.

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